

Ninth of Av, Tisha B'Av 5786

Av is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar which falls in July/August on the Gregorian calendar. The 9th of Av is a traditional day of fasting and mourning by the Orthodox Jewish community in Israel due to numerous, national catastrophic events that have occurred against Israel and our people through the span of History. The main focus of this day is the destruction of both Solomon's Temple and Herod's Temple accompanied by the expulsion of our people from our Promised Land into Exile or Diaspora. 9th of Av was yesterday Thursday July 23rd 2026.

The First Temple was built by King Solomon and the unified Kingdom of Israel and Judah in Jerusalem about the 10th century BCE. Its description is found in I Kings chapters 6-8. It stood for about 410 years until it was destroyed in the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and King Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BCE on the 9th of Av.

After the prophesied 70-year Babylonian exile was complete, our Jewish people returned to Jerusalem and Judah. Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Second Temple and city was built. The second Temple stood about 420 years until it was destroyed by the Roman 10th Legion and Prince Titus in August 70 C.E. on the 9th of Av.

After the destruction of the Second Temple, our Jewish people were dispersed among all the nations. The final revolt of our Jewish people against the Romans occurred in the city of Betar. On July 8, 132 CE, the city of Betar was destroyed and 100,000 Jews slaughtered. One year later, the Roman commander Turnus Rufus plowed under the site of the Temple and the surrounding area. Both events occurred on the 9th of Av. Besides all these events occurring on the same exact day, numerous other historical events happened to our Jewish people and Israel on the 9th of Av that continue to keep it a somber day for us.

The First Crusade (Ironically to deliver Jerusalem from the Muslims) destroyed hundreds of French and Rhineland Jewish communities murdering some 1.2 million Jews. The First Crusade, which murdered 10,000 Jews in the first month alone, began on August 15, 1096, the 9th of Av.

All Jewish people were expelled from England, accompanied by pogroms and confiscation of books and property on July 18, 1290, the 9th of Av.

All Jewish people were expelled from France on July 22, 1306, the 9th of Av.

On March 31, 1492, Queen Isabella along with her husband, Ferdinand, ordered our Jewish people banished from all areas of greater Spain. The edict was signed on March 31, 1492 and the Jews were given four months to leave

the country. There was a massive loss of property, wealth, while families became separated and many died by drowning. The final day Jews could live in Spain, thus beginning the Spanish Inquisitions, was July 31, 1492, the 9th of Av.

World War I began when Germany declared war on Russia. This war began a massive, decades long socio-economic upheaval in Europe that concluded with the Holocaust and World War II. World War I began on August 1st, 1914, the 9th of Av.

SS Commander Heinrich Himmler received approval for "The Final Solution" which resulted in the Holocaust and murder of nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ of the world's Jewish population. It was approved on August 2, 1941, the 9th of Av.

The mass deportation of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto to the Treblinka extermination camp began on July 23, 1942, the 9th of Av.

Gush Katif was a Jewish community in Gaza with 8,600 residents. It was known for its unique greenhouses that exported more than \$200,000,000 in bug-free fruits and vegetables to Europe and the Majority of our Esrog's Lulav sets. In a Land for Peace deal brokered by Pres George Bush Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and all Jewish residents of Gush Katif were forcefully removed on August 13, 2005, the 9th of Av. This land for peace deal was brokered by the United States of America who 10 days later (10 is Yad, the hand of God) when we were struck by the most powerful hurricane every recorded up to that time, Katrina made landfall August 29th. Katrina was followed by an even stronger Hurricane Rita and Wilma, three of the largest hurricanes ever recorded strikes the United States in the same year.

There's more but you get the point! Historically the 9th of Av is not a good time frame for us as a people and as a nation! Both Israel and Judah were expelled from our land and sent into exile, Diaspora, but why?? Let's start with the demise of the Northern Kingdom referred to in scripture after the nation divided as Israel, Ephraim, or Shomron!

II Kings 17:21-23 (TLV). When He had torn Israel from the house of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drew Israel away from following Adonai and made them commit a great sin. ²² The men of Israel kept walking in all the sins that Jeroboam committed. They did not turn away from them, ²³ until Adonai banished Israel from His presence, as He spoke by the hand of all His servants the prophets. So Israel has been exiled from their own land to Assyria to this day.

I have no desire to be insensitive or offensive this evening, however, the key to any prayer or fasting about this time period is the spiritual root and understanding of why it happened!

Leviticus 26:33-35. You I will disperse among the nations, and I will draw out the sword in pursuit after you; your land will be a desolation and your cities a wasteland. ³⁴ Then, at last, the land will be paid its Shabbats. As long as it lies desolate and you are in the lands of your enemies, the land will rest and be repaid its Shabbats. ³⁵ Yes, as long as it lies desolate it will have rest, the rest it did not have during your Shabbats, when you lived there.

Scripture here records the main mystery, not the only one but the main reason! Failure to keep Shabbat and Idolatry; the sins of Jeroboam! The practice of worshiping other gods began early in Jeroboam's reign. When the kingdom was divided Jeroboam came back from exile in Egypt to become king of Israel, Shomron, Ephraim, the northern kingdom He stopped all pilgrimages to Jerusalem to Worship Adonai:

I Kings 12:27-33 (TLV). If this people keep going up to offer sacrifices in the House of Adonai at Jerusalem, then the heart of these people will turn back to their lord—to King Rehoboam of Judah. Then they will kill me and return to King Rehoboam of Judah.” ²⁸ So the king sought counsel and made two golden calves. He said to them, “You have been going up to Jerusalem long enough! Here are your gods O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” **(Same exact words Aaron spoke upon when he completed the Golden Calf in Exodus 32)** ²⁹ Then he set up one in Bethel and the other he put in Dan. ³⁰ Now this thing became a sin for the people went to worship before the one even up in Dan. ³¹ He also made shrines on the high places and appointed priests from among the people, who were not sons of Levi. ³² Then Jeroboam instituted a festival in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, imitating the Festival that is in Judah. He went up to the altar that he built in Bethel, to sacrifice to the calves that he had made. He installed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he made. ³³ Then he went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month—in the month that he had made up from his own heart—and made up a festival for the children of Israel, and went up to the altar to burn incense.

God's word, His ordained commands instruct us how to approach Him, acquire holiness, walk in righteousness and purity, how to worship, and the Moedim, the Feast days! All were changed along with sacrifices, manipulated by Jeroboam into a man-made religion focused on worshiping idols (golden calves) and false feast days in order to control and manipulate the people. He sought advice but scripture doesn't record whose advice but clearly it wasn't Adonai! The cities of Bethel and Dan became the places of worship instead of Jerusalem, God's chosen city. Jeroboam rebelled against Adonai, directly disobeying Him and His word which resulted in both Jeroboam and Israel's demise and destruction. Judah, though spared the Assyrian invasion and exile of Israel would receive that same punishment from Babylon for acting in the same manner, apostasy and idolatry:

II Kings 21:11-14 (TLV). “Since King Manasseh of Judah has done these abominations, and has outdone in wickedness all that the Amorites who were before

him did, and has also made Judah sin with his idols, ¹² therefore thus says Adonai, God of Israel, behold, I am bringing such evil on Jerusalem and Judah that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle! ¹³ I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and I will utterly wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish—wiping it and turning it upside down. ¹⁴ Then I will cast off the remnant of My inheritance and hand them over to their enemies—they will become plunder and spoil to all their enemies.

Adonai said He'd do the exact same punishment to Judah that He did to Shomron, Israel which He did!! There is no condemnation in Messiah Yeshua (Romans 8:1), which is to continuously mourn past events that have been placed under and washed away by the blood of Yeshua! It's like crying and lamenting over spilled milk from your childhood. What's done is done. We know a future, divine heavenly temple, the real one is coming down from heaven, coupled with Yeshua's return! The real holy of Holies today is our heart! We must understand why these destructive events occurred! We see clearly why in the passages we just read! Physical and Spiritual apostasy from Adonai! Both Kingdoms, the Northern and Southern, Israel and Judah suffered grievous Apostasy from Adonai and idolatry! All the Kings of Israel, the Northern Kingdom acted according to the sins of Jeroboam, refusing to return to true worship, in spirit and truth of the Rock, of Adonai the God of Israel which resulted in Israel's destruction and removal from the land first by Assyria approximately 740 B.C.

On the other hand, Judah had periodic revivals under Godly kings resulting in repentance and restoration, but the people would always return to their wickedness and Idolatry, passing/sacrificing their children to the Fires of Molekh, placing Asherah poles in the temple, and engaging in religious male and female prostitution which is intrinsic of Ba'al worship. As a result, Adonai allowed Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to defeat and conquer Judah and take them into captivity in approx. 587 B.C. We have a parallel, similar situation in America today regarding the sins of Jeroboam. It is profoundly relevant for T'isha B'Av regarding the greater body of Messiah, Adonai states:

Isaiah 65:1-6. I made myself accessible to those who didn't ask for me, I let myself be found by those who didn't seek me. I said, 'Here I am! Here I am!' to a nation not called by my name. ² I spread out my hands all day long to a rebellious people who live in a way that is not good, who follow their own inclinations; ³ a people who provoke me to my face all the time, sacrificing in gardens and burning incense on bricks. **(Places of idolatrous worship away from the Temple)** ⁴ They sit among the graves **(represents uncleanness-defilement)** and spend the night in caverns **(In secret places, caves, in the mountains)**; they eat pig meat and their pots hold soup made from disgusting things. ⁵ They say, 'Keep your distance, don't come near me, because I am holier than you.' These are smoke in my nose, a fire that burns all day! ⁶ See, it is written before me; I will not be silent until I repay them; I will repay them to the full,

This burns in me, not because it's an indictment against most of Christianity and the church, not because they eat this way and we don't, it's not we're right and they are wrong, it's because it doesn't need to be this way! Yeshua said in John 7 that's why the world hates Him because He keeps telling them how wicked their ways are! We have crystal clear instructions and guidance from Adonai! His word is not too far off, not too short to save, His word is not out of reach! The word of Adonai is at hand, clear, and easy to understand!

Psalms 119:11. "I treasure your word in my heart, so that I won't sin against you".

It's tempting to quote all of Psalms 119 here regarding this deep understanding of Torah! Speaking for myself, I love Adonai with all of my being! This love drives me to do everything possible to please my master! I'm not saved by works or grace but only by the blood of Yeshua that washes away my sins to be known no more!! My expression of worship and ministry unto Him must align with His commands, instructions, and Kingdom protocol (the Bible)!

In Scripture, love and obedience are inseparable. True love for Adonai is not just a feeling but is expressed through obedience, and obedience is the natural outflow of a heart that loves Him. I Samuel 15:22 teaches that obedience is better than ritual sacrifices, emphasizing that Adonai values a heart inclined toward Him in love over external offerings. Some see obedience as cold or legalistic, but scripture teaches that obedience without love is merely legalism, while love without obedience is not genuine love! Obedience is not a duty imposed from the outside but a heart response to God's love. It is trusting that His commands are for our good, and delighting in following them because we love Him. As Yeshua said in:

John 15:10. If you keep my commands, you will stay in my love -- just as I have kept my Father's commands and stay in his love.

This passage in Isaiah 65 burns in me because I love my Christian brothers and sister! I don't want them to fall short! I desire the fullness, power, and victory of the Kingdom for them which can't be achieved without submission and obedience to Adonai and His complete word! I challenge everyone to read Acts chapter 1-11. Do these chapters reflect you and your congregation? Is the supernatural a norm in your life? Do signs, wonders, and miracles manifest daily in your life and congregation? If not, then why not? Yeshua warned us:

Matthew 24:12. and many people's love will grow cold because of increased distance from Torah.

This explains why love is growing cold in the greater body! What does "love will grow cold" mean? It means spiritual apathy! Genuine love for God and others (agape) wanes as people become indifferent or lukewarm in their faith. Its

distance from God's truth! When sin and lawlessness increase, hearts harden, and devotion to God's ways declines. It's lack of compassion! Selfless love for others diminishes, replaced by selfishness, cynicism, and disregard for the well-being of others. Why does it happen? Because of Increased lawlessness! – Rebellion against God's righteous standards spreads, making it harder to maintain fervent love. Self-love and selfish motives – Many turn their highest affections toward themselves, wealth, and recognition rather than God and others. Testing and trials – Life's challenges can cause believers to lose passion if their roots are shallow or if they withdraw from God's presence

Is it really worth the risk to deny a substantial portion of His word for temporary satisfaction for the things of this world, to prostitute ourselves to the ways of the world, to risk spending eternity in Hell, separated from His presence? I Timothy 3 perfectly describes the body today and ends with this profound statement: "as they retain the outer form of religion but deny its power." This profoundly describes the modern-day body of Messiah today! This whole story is coupled with an event that's recorded in Isaiah 39 regarding Tish B'Av.

Isaiah 39:1-4 (TLV). At that time Merodach-baladan, son of King Baladan of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he had heard that he had been sick and had recovered. ² Now Hezekiah was pleased with them, so he showed them his treasure house—the silver and the gold, the spices and the precious oil—and his whole armory, and everything that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them. ³ Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and asked him, "What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?" Hezekiah replied, "They have come to me from a far country, from Babylon." ⁴ Then he asked, "What have they seen in your house?"

What was Babylon really doing here? Were they seeking a political alliance with Judah? Adonai's blessings and favor upon Hezekiah had no doubt spread, maybe Merodach-baladan had heard the prophecies of how Adonai would defeat Sennacherib – perhaps he simply sensed that Hezekiah would be open to an alliance. No doubt, the news of Hezekiah's healing was a convenient excuse to come to the land. Babylon had been a servant-state of Assyria at this time, but they were looking to throw off their oppressor and were seeking who might join with them. The cold reality is that this was a common practice to spy on and probe the kingdoms around them when they had an opportunity to expand.

Hezekiah received the Babylonian envoy warmly! Here is the first warning in this scenario. Hezekiah was apparently flattered by the attention. Babylon was an up-and-coming powerful Kingdom on the world scene, and here they were inquiring about this tiny king of a small, relatively inconsequential kingdom. It was flattering to be noticed by the big leaguers so Hezekiah seemingly wanted to pridefully show off a little when he should have been discreet!

The fact that Hezekiah had temple treasures to show off reveals the timeframe. This all unfolded just prior to the Assyrian invasion of Israel, the Northern Kingdom and their removal from the land to Ashur! King Hezekiah had attempted to pay off Sennacherib with all of the silver that was found in the house of the Adonai along with other payments as recorded in II Kings 18:14-16.

Hezekiah revealing everything in his kingdom was reckless and incredibly foolish! This was an act born out of pride and arrogance. You don't show your bank account numbers with swift codes to strangers, yet this is exactly what King Hezekiah did with the Babylonians. This is even common knowledge, basic 101 for your own personal safety and self-defense. Don't go to poorly lit ATM's at night, don't flash large amounts of cash in public, don't wear expensive, flashy jewelry in public, same with designer cloths, and flashy exotic expensive vehicles. All these areas mark you as a person of wealth, thereby a target for predators. Don't advertise on social media or even mention in public all the supplies you have stockpiled: gold, silver, food, ammo, as again it marks you as a target. These ambassadors came with gifts which flattered the King but there was no way he could know what was truly in their heart, what the motives and agenda of the king who had sent them were.

I've have been aware of this mystery since our inception and kept the strategies of Adonai close at hand! I have this philosophy with prayer, with our works and projects, we even stay below the radar as we minister with the wolf Pack. Don't advertise your plans and strategies for the kingdom before the enemy! Don't make your battleplans public! Keep the enemy guessing!

Hezekiah was enamored by the spotlight and attention, letting his guard down and revealing everything! It was common knowledge in the ancient middle east that this was a common espionage tactic:

II Samuel 10:1-4. Some time later, when the king of the people of 'Amon died, his son Hanun became king in his place. ² David said, "I will show grace to Hanun the son of Nachash, as his father showed grace to me." So David sent his servants to pass him a message of comfort concerning his father. David's servants entered the territory of the people of 'Amon; ³ but the leaders of the people of 'Amon said to Hanun their lord, "Do you really think David is honoring your father by sending people to comfort you? Hasn't David actually sent his servants to you in order to look the city over, reconnoiter it and overthrow it?" ⁴ So Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half their beards, cut off their clothes halfway up, at their buttocks, and then sent them away.

Although King David's intentions were pure the people of Amnon did not receive David's servants as a message of comfort but as spies! Hezekiah should have used extreme prejudice and caution. The prophet Isaiah had specifically prophesied that Babylon would capture & enslave Judah.

Isaiah 13:1–5. This is a prophecy about Bavel, which Yesha'yahu the son of Amotz saw: ² Hoist a banner on a high mountain, shout to [the invaders]; beckon them to enter the Nobles' Gate. ³ "I have ordered my holy ones, summoned my heroes, eager and bold, to execute my anger." ⁴ Listen! A tumult on the mountains - it sounds like a vast multitude! Listen! The uproar of the kingdoms of the nations gathering together! ADONAI-Tzva'ot is mustering an army for war. ⁵ They come from a distant land, from beyond the horizon. It's ADONAI, with the weapons of his rage, to lay waste to all the earth.

Yesha'yahu confronts King Hezekiah over his error, pointing out his shortcoming, His sin! This is the king who took the taunting letter from Assyrian King Sennacherib into the Temple before Adonai and asked for help! Now these spies show up and he never once inquired of Adonai about them! When Yesha'yahu the prophet came to King Hezekiah and asked him, "What did these men say? Where did they come from?" in verse 3 he already knew what Hezekiah had done. Yesha'yahu was giving Hezekiah an opportunity to confess. To his credit the king is completely transparent and truthfully tells Yesha'yahu everything. Hizkiyahu doesn't seem to recognize the trouble he brought upon the nation through his sin and foolish pride.

Isaiah 39:5-8 (TLV). Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah: "Hear the word of Adonai-Tzva'ot, ⁶ 'Behold, days are coming when everything in your house, which your fathers have stored up to this day, will be carried to Babylon—nothing will be left,' says Adonai. ⁷ 'Moreover, some of your descendants—who will issue from you, whom you will father—will be taken away and will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'" ⁸ Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of Adonai which you have spoken is good." For he thought, "For there will be shalom and security in my days."

To be sure, the Babylonian captivity was NOT brought about by Hezekiah's sin but it was the trigger that set the judgement and diaspora in motion. The apostasy and idolatry by the people of Judah resulted in Adonai's wrath upon them! Hezekiah's son Manasseh would provoke God in horrendous ways. However, Hezekiah's foolishness set the metric for how the people of Judah as a whole would be punished. It was the people's sin, apostasy, idolatry, and pride against Adonai that caused them to be removed from the land, just like it was Hezekiah's pride and arrogance that established how it would be implemented and what would be taken away.

We have a greater promise, one to rejoice over, not of earthly temples which are part of the prophetic plan but of a new Jerusalem, with its Heavenly Temple, the real one that will descend from Heaven upon the earthly Jerusalem and Yeshia, fully man and fully God will reign from the His throne IN Jerusalem!